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STATINTL

Divorce Trial Opens: Wife Crueler Than Russ--U2 Pilot

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga., Jan. 15.—(UPI)—The divorce trial of Francis Gary Powers opened here today with testimony by the former U2 pilot that his wife was "the only person who ever mistreated me" during the almost two years he was a Soviet prisoner.

Both Powers, 33, and his pretty wife, 27, testified today. The trial will be continued tomorrow.

Mrs. Powers has filed a counter suit in the divorce action, charging Powers failed to treat her like an average American housewife.

POWERS, whose aborted U2 flight over Russia in 1960 touched off an international controversy, is seeking to end his eight-year marriage to Mrs. Barbara Gay Powers. He contends she is an habitual drunk and abused him.

Powers told the story of his shattered marriage to a jury of 12 married men who will decide whether he must pay his wife alimony and make her a property settlement.

POWERS testified that he went for as long as 45 days without a letter from his wife while in the Russian prison camp.

MRS. POWERS, weeping often during the trial, said she was constantly besieged by reporters and representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency after her husband's plane was downed over Russia.

She denied she knew her husband was on any spy assignment and charged that he "took our future into his hands without my knowledge."

She charged that her family had her declared mentally incompetent after she refused to see a psychiatrist and said she was admitted to an Augusta hospital for treatment.

SHE SAID that when her husband returned to the United States "he took all his bitterness out on me."

She denied his charge that she was an excessive drinker.

"Gary has changed a great deal," she testified. "I think he is just void of all feeling now. All he wants is his money."

"I didn't marry Gary Powers for money," she said. "I married for companionship, love and children but I didn't have an opportunity for that."

She disclosed that she twice had conceived children but both cases resulted in miscarriages because of "a lack of medical facilities" in the places where her husband was stationed.

MRS. POWERS' attorney, Robert Green, questioned Powers about his patriotism, asking him at one point if he had ever voted.

Powers replied he had not and didn't even know who was vice president while he was in prison.

But he added however that his stay in a Russian prison "made me appreciate this country quite a bit."